

It will be remembered that the main battle of Braxton was fought on Oct. 3, 1861 and that the Confederate army fell back to the Top Allegheny, and went to building cabins for the winter, and fortifying and building batteries.

The idea of the Confederates in moving to the Top Allegheny was to prevent an army from marching in behind them by the way of the North Fork road, and the Greenbank Mountain road. Pickets were placed down the Greenbank road, and on the North Fork road. The pickets on the North Fork road decided to blockade it, to be sure that the enemy could not get in the rear, and company G was on the detail to pilot a company of soldiers down on the North Fork with the instructions to blockade it in such a tangle that it would take a year or more to cut it out. The soldiers cut down the mannoth hemlock across the road for about four miles. The soldiers said that it was the largest blockade in the war. After the war it took the road hands about two years to cut it out of the road, and each man working about four days. The Greenbank mountain road was also blockaded.

It was in the engagement on Top Allegheny that the old Confederates soldiers, William Slayton was wounded and crept off in the bush to die, but was found two days later by his comrades who were searching for missing soldiers. Their attention was attracted to the place of some one singing a good old hymn. When found, they were told he though he would sing a hymn before he died, but he recovered and lived many years.

It will be remembered that the home of John Yeager was in the center of the battle field. We have it from Mrs. Rachel Sutton, who at that time was staying with her uncle, John Yeager and Mr. J. D. Beard, a daughter of John Yeager, that they were awakened in the morning before daylight by the loud talking of the soldiers. They were getting ready for battle, and were filling the breastworks just back of the Yeager house. When the bullets began falling on the house like hail.

The Confederate General ordered the inmates to vacate the house, the Yeager family moved out. When they came back, after the battle, they found the house riddled with bullets, one corner was badly damaged by a cannon ball and house was filled with wounded soldiers. The upstairs was used for a hospital for many days, and many of the soldiers died in the house.

The retreat of the Union forces after the battle was known as "Slaytons Retreat" and led to the composition of the old violin tune of the same name, which was composed by two Confederates soldiers, George B. Sutton and Robert Wolfenbarger, who said they heard him trying to give the command to retreat, but couldn't say anything for stammering. It was reported afterwards, that the delay of the Union army, and failing to make the attack in the rear at the proper time was due to the fact that they found a barrel or two of good cider at the Nottingham home and wouldn't march a step until it was all consumed and their canteens filled. The unreasonable thing about the official reports of the battle of Top Allegheny is that perhaps 2000 soldiers on each side would stand and shoot at each other from daylight until 2:30 and only 20 killed on each side. But it will be remembered that the boys of the Blue and the Gray" who fought were amateurs in the art of warfare, and had not yet been drilled, and had not learned the military tactics of Jackson, Lee, and Grant. The shooting must have been at random, for the lumber company who cut the timber in that section found a number of trees half cut down by the cannon balls, these trees were said to be entirely out of the line of battle.

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The experience of a soldier at the battle of Droop Mountain in 1863. A foot soldier marching through to take his stand at Droop Mountain passed near his home and his folks presented him with a fine boiled ham, which he placed in a knapsack and carried some twenty odd miles on a forced march to the battlefield where he had a few hours rest and was then involved in the battle. The Confederates retreated and marched until late at night when they called a halt just outside of Lewisburg. This soldier in 24 hours had walked over 50 miles and had fought a battle. Being ready for refreshments, he looked for his ham and found that there was nothing but a rock. Just before the battle, while he was taking a nap, some comrade had stolen his ham and replaced it with a rock weighing about the same number of pounds. It was this stone he had been defending against onslaught and which he had carried all these weary miles.

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Juanita Willey

William Young Sr. of Stony Creek who had neighbors fighting on both sides. Also many relatives and friends, attempted strict neutrality. For this he was made a victim of local animosities. He had some skill as a physician, and it became customary for the neighbors to call for his help during the dreadful epidemic of diptheria and other camp diseases which swept the county during the war. It was while answering a call of mercy to a family living on Sevego that he was met at the Griffin place by a party of Confederate sympathizers and soldiers and put under arrest. He was first confined in the jail at Huntersville, thence conveyed favor, kinsman, the late Levi Gay, a Confederate soldier, was allowed to take him to Highland. Mr Young sickened and died during that same year in Libby Prison in Richmond. His end was no doubt hastened by worry and grief over unjust imprisonment, as much as by necessary hardship endured by a prisoner of war, removed from the free environment of his beloved mountain country. He was by principle anti-slavery, and therefore classed as pro-federal.

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